

GEO. W. THOMSON
16101634



PICTORIAL HISTORY

• HEADQUARTERS •
*SECOND • MILITARY
RAILWAY • SERVICE*

IN THE
E.T.O.

This book is dedicated to the memory of Frank Amarante who followed where the cause of FREEDOM led and fell where FREEDOM was challenged, that those of us who yet live might embrace LIBERTY as our heritage.





BRIGADIER GENERAL CLARENCE L. BURPEE
General Manager, Second Military Railway Service
A.C.L.R.R., Jacksonville, Fla.

HEADQUARTERS
2D MILITARY RAILWAY SERVICE
Office of General Manager

A P O 3 5 0
1 August 1945

TO: Officers and Enlisted Men of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Second Military Railway Service.

In this book you have a partial record of the days we have spent together. While life in the Army, particularly this Army, which was organized swiftly and placed into operation quickly, has been replete with many difficulties and trying circumstances, you have responded magnificently. It has given me great pleasure to realize that Americans, faced with a tremendous task, have individually risen to such great heights that the completion of the task has been so rapidly and cheerfully attained.

As members of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Second Military Railway Service, you have contributed no small part to the victories of the Allied Armies. You may well be proud of yourselves, and the railroad men of the United States may rest assured that you have done a superb job under the hazards of war.

Sincerely,

Clarence L. Burpee

CLARENCE L. BURPEE,
Brigadier General, USA,
Commanding.

" STARS AND EAGLES "



Major General Frank S. Ross
and Brig. General Clarence L.
Burpee at Cherbourg, France.
July 1944.



THE DEPARTMENT CHIEFS

Left to right :

Colonel W. T. Elmes.
Colonel F. L. King.
Colonel S. H. Bingham.
Brig. Gen. C. L. Burpee.
Colonel E. H. Qualls.
Colonel G. J. Mulick.



Left to right :

Brig. General Carl R. Gray,
Director General Military Rail-
ways.
Major General Frank S. Ross,
Chief of Transportation.
Brig. General
Clarence L. Burpee,
General Manager, 2nd MRS.

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RAILWAY HEADQUARTERS



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Interstate Commerce Commission, Washington, D.C.



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Erie R.R. Cleveland, Ohio.



CAPTAIN NEAL T. DE LONG, Statistical Control.
U.P.R.R. Omaha, Neb.



LT. JAMES W. HAGELIN,
Aide.
C.M.St.P. & P.R.R. Duluth, Minn.



LT. CHARLES L. HAND,
Ass't Adjutant.
C.B. & Q.R.R. Chicago, Ill.

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U.P.R.R. Omaha, Neb.



LT. COL. GEORGE N. SLADE, General Superintendent Transportation.
N.P.R.R. St. Paul, Minn.



LT. COL. ORVIS H. OSBORN, General Superintendent Terminals.
A.T. & S.F.R.R. Fort Worth, Tex.



MAJOR EVERETT W. HARGRAVE, Superintendent of Car Service.
M.P.R.R. Houston, Tex.



CAPTAIN EDMUND J. PHILLIPS, Superintendent Telephone and Telegraph.
"Railway Age", Chicago, Ill.



Lt. THOMAS G. BYRNES, Assistant.
Illinois Terminal R.R. Alton, Ill.

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Vanderbilt Univ. Nashville, Tenn.



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MAJOR EARL R. EWIN, Chief Mechanical Engineer.
C.M. St. P. & P.R.R. Chicago, Ill.



MAJOR RUDOLPH C.P. KILLIAN, Superintendent of cars.
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Chief Electrical Engineer.
C.M. St. P. & P.R.R. Minneapolis, Minn.



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Assistant.
Rutgers Univ. New Brunswick, N.J.

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N.Y.C.R.R. Pittsburgh, Pa.



LT. COL. LAURENCE V. JOHNSON, Chief Maintenance Engineer.
M. St. P. & S. Ste M.R.R. St. Paul, Minn.



LT. COL. KENNETH D. HAUSER, Chief Construction Engineer.
Hauser Construction Company. Portland, Ore.



MAJOR HAROLD P. MORGAN, Chief Maintenance Engineer, B. & B.
Penna R.R. Baltimore, Md.



MAJOR EDWIN J. SCHAEFER, Signal and Communications Engineer,
A.C.L. R.R. Wilmington, N.C.



CAPTAIN JOSEPH C. HOWARD, Supervisor Work Equipment
Fort Worth and Denver City, R.R. Childress, Tex.



CAPTAIN JOSEPH M. RICHMOND, Superintendent Water Service.
International Filter Co. New York, N.Y.



LT. FREEMAN P. DREW, Office Engineer.
C.M. St. P. & P.R.R. Chicago, Ill.



LT. COL. GEORGE D. SAUNDERS, Assistant General Manager Stores.
Illinois Terminal R.R. Alton, Ill.



CWO. PHILIP J. MAHER,
Administrative Assistant.
Gulf Power Co. Pensacola, Fla.



CAPTAIN WESTON P. AYRES,
Fuel Agent.
A.T. & S.F.R.R. Eldorado, Kan.

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Frank R. Skinner Drug Co. Des Moines, Iowa.



CAPTAIN ARNOLD S. KEMP, Operations Officer.
American Smelting & Refining Co. New York, N.Y.



CAPTAIN WILLIAM A. SCHULZE, Investigations Officer.
New York University. New York, N.Y.



LT. MAX SCHMIDT, Assistant.
Bureau of Highway Safety. Harrisburg, Pa.



CAPTAIN LAWRENCE O. SCHNIEBER,
Hardy Furniture Co. Lincoln, Neb.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY



CAPTAIN CURTIS D. BUFORD, Company Commander.
Mass. Inst. of Tech. Boston, Mass.



LT. RALPH N. MORGAN, Mess, Supply and Transportation.
U.P.R.R. Kansas City, Mo.

ATTACHED OFFICERS



COLONEL
GEORGE W. BEELER.



LT. COLONEL
MERLE M. SHAPPELL.



LT. COLONEL
RICHARD L. JEWETT.

LT. COLONEL
CLARENCE L. BOYER

LT. COLONEL
RALPH O. JENSEN





MAJOR
LEWIS W. MOSS.



MAJOR
ALEX N. WILLIAMS.



CAPTAIN
JAMES C. DEVERY.

MAJOR
WILLIAM R. SIMONE

MAJOR
ALBERT C. JONES.





CAPTAIN JOHN STILL



LT. LEO C. CURLEY.



CAPTAIN
GEORGE L. CROSS.



LT. EDWARD R. MADER.



WOJG.
JOHN L. PROBERT.



LT. NORMAN L. ZIEGLER.



LT. REG. M. CHENEY.



LT. RAYMOND
H. GREENE.

RAILWAY HEADQUARTERS



Left to right, first row :

Williams, Hand, Bayless, Gilbert, MacHoiz, McNally, General Burpee, Robinson, Pepper, Sullivan, Qualls, Conway.

Second row :

De Long, Tuten, Bobek, Van Deusen, Cobb, Fehlber, Lewis, Sterud, Minter, Guido.

Third row :

Raduazzo, Sanders, Nicholas, Mattas, Minon, Mangel, Royce, Murray, Shover, Furr.

TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT



Left to right, first row :

Byrnes, Osborn, Butts, Daigle, Judd, Wenstrup, Graves, La France, Bean, Tenney, Cutting, Mulick.

Second row :

Lick, Slade, Saltzman, Flohr, Kougocheff, Siemer, McVey, Cafferty, Vilhauer, Hutcheon, Hargrave, Stanford.

Third row :

Schroeder, Rinker, Schmitz, Cutting, Olsen, Anderson, Haro, Stice, TeVogt, Glanville, Glover, Judson.

Fourth row :

Lewis, Morganfeld, Kautzmann, Bessin, Yates.

EQUIPMENT DEPARTMENT



Left to right, first row :

Sclater, Reagan, Horsman, Hilliard.

Second row :

King, Decker, Devore, Dykes, Young, Clapp, Williamson, Oakes, Allen, Ewin.

Third row :

Marting, Colfer, Adams, Blinn, Reid, Fisher, Lawrence, O'Neill, Zachariasen, Killian.

ENGINEERING DEPARTMENT



Left to right, first row :

Elmes, Hauser, Brodsky, Elefante, Craft, Burt, Roman, Nevitte, Coyle, Schaefer.

Second row :

Jones, Moss, Richmond, Gustavson, Bietry, Migliara, Phillips, Kammerer, Johnson, Howard.

Third row :

Drew, Gilson, Bean, Eskelin, Sutton, Preston, Rustigian, Meuter.

Fourth row :

Beaver, Doe, Collins, Edwards, Cooper, Schultz, Brown, Lehrke, Schoenberg, Ziegler.

Fifth row :

Buckley, Shoemaker, Roberts, Selleck, Kessler.

STORES DEPARTMENT



Left to right, first row :

Saunders, Buckle, Denison, Tuckey, Place, Carr, Crenshaw, Hartzler.

Second row :

Nussrallah, Ahlf, Delage, Stark, Gravatt, Johnson, Baum.

Third row :

Webber, Gautier, Bean, Hanson, Pena, Johnson, Maher.

SECURITY DEPARTMENT



Left to right, first row :

Oliphant, Kemp, Schulze, Schnieber, Schmidt.

Second row :

Erickson, Sabo, Gravitz, Short, Stetler, Moraitis, Baca, Burnham, Friedman.

HEADQUARTERS COMPANY



Left to right, first row:

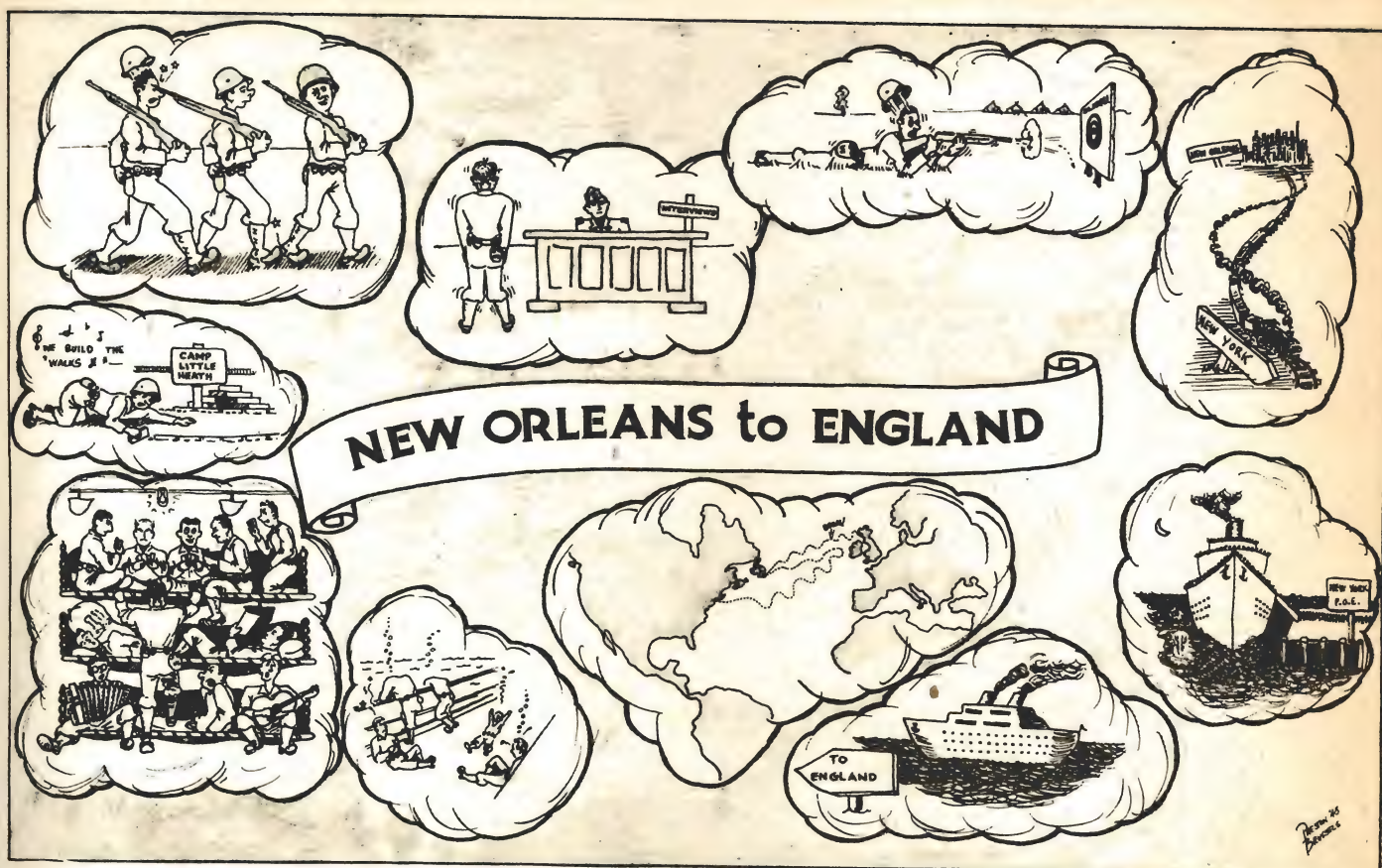
Wheeler, Luckey, Kelly, Gang, Kranz, Nilsen, Aragon.

Second row:

Buford, Mangel, Myers, Dudek, Shibley, Halper, Morgan.

Third row:

Smiley, Meade, Spangler, Hite, Recca, McCune, Gregg, Chisholm, Susla.



The Second Military Railway Service was activated on 28 December 1943 at Camp Plauche, Louisiana, with Colonel Clarence L. Burpee assuming duties as Commanding Officer and General Manager. Cadre and enlisted personnel were assigned from existing units in Camp Plauche.

During the month of January, certain phases of basic training were given our newly activated organization including a seven-day period beginning 2 January 1944 at Slidell Rifle Range, La., and inspections and physical examinations by camp officials to ascertain fitness for overseas duty.

In February attention was focused on the movement of the unit to the New York Port of Embarkation. We were formally alerted on 5 February 1944 and inspections were conducted on basic training, clothing and equipment. On 14 February 1944 at 0945 C.W.T. the process of entraining was completed in troop sleepers and departure from Camp Plauche was made at 1000 C.W.T., 14 February. The trip afforded our unit the first experience of mess provided by its full complement of cooks. Two stops, one at Meridian, Miss., and Knoxville, Tenn., were utilized for exercises and short hikes. The arrival and detraining at Camp Kilmer, N. J., was at 1030 E.W.T. on 16 February 1944. Weather on departure at Camp Plauche was rainy and upon arrival at Camp Kilmer, clear with a light snow on the ground.

Upon arrival at Camp Kilmer we were quartered in barracks and processing was initiated and completed in record time by 17 February 1944. On 18 February partial pay was granted the enlisted personnel and 12 hour passes were given. On

21 February we were assigned new quarters and on the 24th the alert was established and final physical examinations were given. The 25th of February at 0915 an advance party departed from Camp Kilmer for the port and at 1230 hours boarded the US Army Transport "General George S. Simonds". The main body of the organization formed at 1900 on 26 February and departed at 1915 from Camp Kilmer. We arrived at Jersey City, N.J. at 2030 hours and boarded a ferry for the New York Port of Embarkation, Brooklyn, N.Y., arriving at 2200 and completed boarding the "General George S. Simonds" at 2330.

The ship left port at 0835, 27 February and took her assigned place in a convoy which was forming. The weather was pleasant and the sea calm. The major events of the next few days were the issuance of a ship's newspaper and the seemingly endless call to deck for life-boat drill.

Six days out with visions of being close to somewhere at 1700 on 3 March the "General Simonds" was forced to drop out of and behind the convoy due to trouble which developed in the engine room. Repairs were effected that evening and we rejoined the convoy on 4 March. The empty feeling which can only be felt by leaving a convoy returned the second time on 5 March when we reversed the compass and scampered back toward the west with our little destroyer escort zig-zaging dead ahead. A little booklet, "A Short Guide To Great Britain", had been distributed and we were turning our clocks back and wondering just where we were going. The weather became extremely rough on 4 March and sleet and snow was encountered that night. On 5 March the course was still decidedly west and the decks were icy and slippery. At 1500 a B-24 bomber was sighted bearing Canadian insignia and we knew land could not be far away.

Land was sighted at 1225 on 6 March and at 2015 the "General Simonds" docked at Argentia in the Placentia area of Newfoundland. The Army post which could be seen from the dock area turned out to be Ft. McAndrew. During our layover for repairs motion picture films were exchanged and our entertainers performed for an audience of 2500 persons. Mail was taken ashore and laundry service was procured for all personnel aboard. Two hikes were made during our stay and the scenery, the cold brisk air and snow (plus a touch of local color) formulated an opinion that Ft. McAndrew was a swell place to stop off. Albeit a great desire to leave was predominate among the men. Church services on shore 12 March were cancelled and the men in formation on the docks were recalled to the ship — temporary quarantine — 4 cases of mumps!

Last mail was sent ashore 0930 on 13 March and at 1025 the ship left the pier. At 0730 on 14 March a convoy was sighted and thankfully joined at 0915. At 1015 our destroyer escort, which had been our constant companion for ten days ran down through the center of the convoy and as they passed, bade us adieu over the loudspeaker system with "goodbye, good luck and take care of the women". The principle focus of interest was a converted merchant ship aircraft carrier loaded, including deck, with U.S. pursuit ships, but flying the flag of Great Britain. The convoy consisted of approximately 28 ships, mostly tankers and escorts — a valuable convoy and so thought

Jerry. Shipboard life continued complacently on calm seas until 18 March.

At 1000 in a heavy fog with visibility limited, a tanker in the second row from our starboard side was struck forward of the bridge on her starboard side, without warning, by a torpedo. Many of the personnel on board our ship witnessed the occurrence in stunned amazement. One moment, the tanker was sloughing along through the mist; then suddenly, without any sound audible to us, she hesitated and a large billow of orange-yellow flame and smoke, like a huge balloon, seemed to rise from her forward hold to a height of several hundred feet. She rose in the air at her bow, then dipped her nose under the sea and like a moving picture seemed on the verge of an immediate dive to Davey Jones's locker. Her headway was immediately lost and as the convoy moved past we followed her with our eyes and saw her swing out of control, broadside to following ships. Two destroyer escorts fell out with her and as she disappeared in the mist of the horizon, we thought of the men on board and looked around ourselves. For several hours our entire convoy shifted course every ten to fifteen minutes by whistle signal. When we were again in the clear, word was passed about that the destroyer escorts had radioed that they had cornered the sub and had rescued the entire crew of the tanker, but that might have been a rumor. The remainder of the trip was uneventful and we arrived in the Firth of Clyde, 20 March. At 1026 the ship anchored at Gourock, Scotland and shortly after lunch we were boarded by the US Port Commander accompanied by British Major General Sir Harry Maitland who addressed us over the loudspeaker in orientation talks.

Our unit debarked at 1700 on 20 March, went by ferry to Greenock, Scotland and entrained at 1815, in the first English train most of us had ever seen, leaving a detachment of men to care for and assist in moving the unit equipment to our new station. A Red Cross Clubmobile served coffee, donuts, cigarettes and chewing gum. Departure was at 2140 for a destination which was still a mystery. Our train halted at Crewe, England, at 0600 on 21 March and a large lunch and coffee was served by a local service organization. At 1250 we arrived at Chadwell Heath, a London suburb and marched to a new camp at Little Heath, arriving at 1400. Arrival was followed by the discovery that our Commanding Officer, Colonel Burpee, had been promoted to the grade of Brigadier General, effective 24 February 1944.

At about 0130 on 22 March, "Jerry" prepared a welcome show for us, which lasted about an hour. But what a commonplace statement, the Irish linen became nothing but linen and other things became more important. Searchlights filled the skies and anti-aircraft guns were firing all around us — some within a quarter of a mile — and flak, which we discovered gains heat as it falls, was falling all around us. Red sighting targets were dropped by enemy aircraft, deep detonations indicated bombs striking at various places and the rocket guns "swooshed" as the searchlight beams spotted several planes. We were at last in a theater of operations.

In consternation we exchanged our American dollars for heavy and stange currency, cable facilities were arranged and the personnel set about making many needed improvements to the camp area — a new camp just released for occupancy. On 26 March, 1 officer and 50 enlisted men were detached to TC-201 on a freight car building detail for technical training. April 3-6 incl., 18 officers were detached to various headquarters in England for special work. On 17 April a school was started to

bring the telegraph operators up to required standard on standard keys and sounders, railway operating rules, operation of P.B.X. equipment and instructions on International Morse Code. Advantage was taken of the British technical school on bridging and on 15 April, 2 officers and 6 enlisted men were dispatched for a three weeks course. Likewise, 2 officers and 5 enlisted men departed on 22 April to attend a special course conducted by the British on railway signalling. On 18 April the Administration Department assembled their enlisted personnel and initiated training in office procedure, typing and stenography. On 19 April two additional officers were dispatched to Sudberry and Newberry, England for special work. On 23 April our unit was relieved from assignment to Hq, Special Troops, ETOUSA and assigned to Forward Echelon, Communications Zone. On 3 May, 1 officer and 7 enlisted men departed on detached service to Advance Section Communications Zone, Bristol, England, for a special training assignment.

Technical training was further accelerated on 15 May with the establishment of other schools — one for the Administration Department including the clerical staffs of all other departments, one for the Equipment Department and one for the Engineering Department. Classes for the Administration school included procedure in administrative functions, military channels and military correspondence, while the Equipment Department conducted classes in drafting and reviewed plans of standard equipment and the Engineering Department conducted classes in drafting, surveying, mathematics and office administration.

A detail of 20 enlisted men were placed on duty with the Office Chief of Transportation, ETOUSA, on special assignment 26 May. One officer was placed on detached service with Office Chief of Transportation, ETOUSA and one officer was transferred to the 707th Railway Grand Division. Other activities included four days of bivouacs and additional instruction in land mines and booby traps.

The month of June was marked by many changes of interest, included the division of the unit into detachments for movement from Little Heath Camp, Essex, England, to concentration areas and marshalling areas. The first of June has as its outstanding event another "dry run" execution of a Passive Air Defense Plan for defense of our camp. On 4 June a warning order came that our unit might move any time after 10 June and on the same date officers on detached service were recalled. The long awaited day about which there had been so much speculation — D-Day — came on 6 June. We had an idea something was up since the previous day our P.X. truck was not permitted on the docks to secure supplies and all night from about midnight on there was a constant and mighty roar of airplanes passing over Little Heath Camp.

At 1000, 6 June, the personnel of our unit assembled in the dayroom to listen to General Eisenhower's speech which was the official confirmation to an announcement of the invasion made by the German radio earlier in the day. It began to look as if the M.R.S. was on the march again and things were humming on the 13th in preparation for the departure of the Advance Detachment and Detachment A. On the morning of the 14th, 6 officers and 4 enlisted men departed by truck convoy for Winchester, England and the following day proceeded to Southampton, where the detachment was further split into two parties — the first of which boarded ship at about 2000 hours and embarked for France early the morning of 16 June. On 27 June

the remainder of the Advance Detachment departed by plane for France.

On 14 June, Detachment A, consisting of 12 officers and 2 enlisted men departed by truck convoy to entrain at Chadwell Heath for Tidworth, England, where they participated in a training program which included hikes, range firing, orientation talks and calisthenics. Two officers joined the detachment at Tidworth and on the 29th the vehicle detachment left for the Southampton marshalling area. This party left England 30 June and arrived in France the same day. The remainder of Detachment A left Tidworth on the 28th and proceeded to Southampton from which point they embarked 1 July and anchored in the bay until the following morning before sailing.

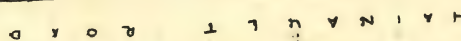
June 15th will be a day long remembered by the portion of the organization remaining at Little Heath — our first experience with the German robot bombs. About 2130 the air raid siren sounded an alert which lasted about one hour. The all clear sounded and fifteen minutes later the second alert was sounded and the organization dispersed under "stand to orders" with all posts manned. This condition continued until 0500 the following morning, during which time one flying bomb landed about one mile from the camp. This was the first of the German robots and from then on they were daily and nightly occurrences as long as we were at Little Heath Camp.

Between 15 and 20 June three officers returned from assignments of detached service and these officers with two additional officers and sixty-one enlisted men comprised Detachment B. On 20 June, Detachment B departed by truck convoy from Little Heath to Chadwell Heath where they entrained for Bristol, England. When the detachment arrived at Bristol they were not expected and it took some time to arrange for billets, finally obtained in South Side Woods Camp with the 10th Traffic Regulating Group. On 22 June the detachment left Bristol enroute to Brock Barracks, Reading, for a stay of about ten days. A training program was set up, including close order drill, hikes, a trip to the rifle range, organized athletics and classes in French. On 2 July the detachment moved to Southampton where they were processed and on 4 July embarked for France, anchoring in the harbor until the following morning before sailing.

With the exception of the usual air activity things were rather quiet around Little Heath. On 24 June, Detachment C had a busy day in final packing. Two officers remained in London for a few days to close the London Headquarters as well as Little Heath Camp. One officer and one enlisted man departed by truck with organizational equipment, taking with them the unit mascot ETOUSA, a small dog acquired during our stay in England. On the same day, three officers and forty-three enlisted men departed by truck to Waterloo Station, London and from there to Stockbridge, thence by truck to Northwood Park, N.W. of Winchester, England. On 29 June General Burpee left London Headquarters and travelled by plane to France.

Detachment C moved by truck to Southampton the morning of the 5th, arriving in time for the noon meal and were quartered in tents. The truck with one officer and enlisted man plus the organizational equipment departed at 0600 on 7 July, leaving our mascot behind as he had strayed away. The remainder of the detachment moved from camp shortly after 1400, marching to the docks, boarding ship that evening. After moving out into the harbor, the ship dropped anchor remaining there until the following morning at which time they sailed for France, bringing to an end our stay in England and opening a new phase in our unit's activities.

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Stores Dept.



Equipment Dept.



Company Headquarters.



Transportation Dept.

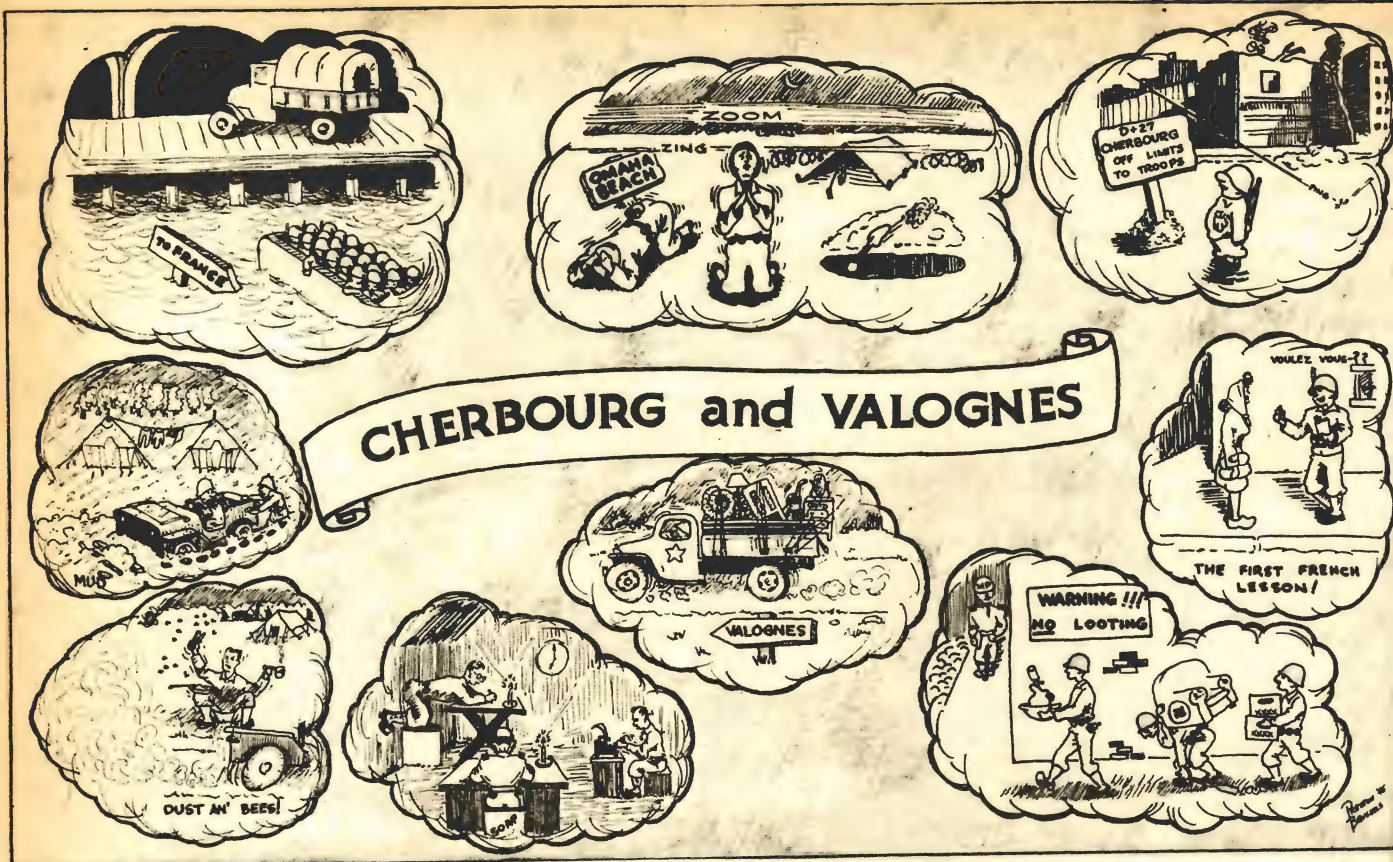


Administration Dept.



Engineering Dept.





When the 2nd Military Railway Service arrived in France it found that extensive plans and preparations, although more detailed than necessary in some phases, worked to an advantage.

Originally it was assumed that the U. S. Army Engineers would have to reconstruct the double track from Cherbourg to Lison. From there the English would build a single track between Lison and Mezidon, and south to Le Mans. We were to extend a single line from Lison to Folligny by way of St. Lo and Coutances, on through to Dol, and from Dol to Rennes; there the track would split — one line going east to Laval and Le Mans and the other west into the Brittany Peninsula to Redon and Auray. This was the detailed planning for the railroads up to D plus 90. It was destined to be far surpassed.

The accomplishment of this was the initial task of the Second Military Railway Service. On D plus 11 the advance reconnaissance party of Headquarters landed at Omaha Beach; near Grand Camp. The party consisted of Lt. Col. W. T. Elmes, commanding, Lt. Col. W. C. Morris, Lt. Col. F. L. King, Maj. H. P. Morgan, Maj. B. W. Stone, Capt. G. C. Cross, T/Sgt. H. A. Coyle, Plc's Ronald Bolas and M. B. Hilliard, and Pvt. Rae Craft. They were the first American railroad men to set foot on the continent of Europe in this war.

A period of approximately a week was spent in



the vicinity of the beach heads, and frequent trips were made reconnoitering the railroad between Carentan and Isigny. On the 24th a portion of the group started out for Cherbourg, since it was believed its fall was imminent. However, when the party reached Valognes they were informed they should stay there until further orders were received. During the time spent here considerable additional reconnaissance of rail lines was accomplished, visiting Montebourg, St. Vaast and as far up as Barfleur. The greeting party at St. Vaast was such as was frequently encountered by early arrivals in French towns. The people turned out, threw flowers, and generally gave the group a royal "bienvenu". This was one of the towns that had been by-passed in the battle without damage.

Meanwhile another portion of the advance party had entered Cherbourg several days after its capture on June 26th. Railway Headquarters was established in Cherbourg at 10, rue de Bucaille, and the station was taken over for train operations.

During the reconnaissance period, one officer, Maj. B. W. Stone, was wounded when an 88 shell exploded next to the jeep in which he was riding. Every man in the party was subject to bombing, strafing, and shelling by the enemy, and they were frequently shot at by snipers. Maj. Stone was the first casualty of the Military Railway Service on the Continent.

On the 29th of June, Brigadier General Clarence L. Burpee, Commanding General of the Second Military Railway Service, arrived in France by plane from England and joined his advance detachment at Cherbourg. The first main detachment of the Second Military Railway Service, arrived at Omaha Beach on 2 July and proceeded to Cherbourg. They were closely followed by the second detachment on July 5th, and the third detachment on the 8th. This completed the installation of the Headquarters at Cherbourg, France. Directional road signs pointing the way to the Headquarters offices were the first to appear on the streets of this French city.

Inspection of the railroad facilities available was started immediately. The senior officer in each department made arrangements for prompt action by the forces available at those points where the damage was greatest and the need for repairs most urgent for initial operations. French civilian labor was utilized extensively as the French people returned to their homes. Former employees of the railroad system were placed on duty wherever possible in their normal railroad occupation. Actual reconstruction of the railroad right-of-way was undertaken by the Engineer Corps as specified by the Military Railway Service.

A great deal of useful rolling stock was captured on the Cherbourg Peninsula, including 1384 wagons, 50 locomotives, and 11 streamlined passenger coaches. Also found on the peninsula were two rail cars, and these were put to immediate use by reconnaissance parties. A large stock of rail was found stored, some of which had been sent to France during the last war. Before each piece of equipment was put to use it was examined for booby traps, checked for necessary repairs, and marked according to its usability.

During this time personnel were also busily engaged in making the Headquarters operable. Everyone got settled and billets and offices were put in order. An enviable mess was established, considering field conditions. The Administrative Department was kept busy formulating procedures and putting out directives. Railway Operating Battalions and Railway Grand Divisions under the jurisdiction of the Headquarters were arriving and billeting arrangements had to be made.

The Engineering Department was soon busy turning out maps of rail facilities from information brought in first-hand by their reconnaissance parties. Reproduction was made on a captured German printing machine using captured German paper.

Offices of the Headquarters itself were in a group of old residences, and all furnishings had to be obtained by searching the necessary articles out of abandoned German premises. Due to the urgent need of telephone communication facilities and a lack of standard Signal Corps equipment, an old German switchboard, along with French telephones and some field phones, were pressed into use. Soon a good inter-office system was in operation, with connections to Grand Divisions and Operating Battalions in the area and to Signal Corps nets.

On the 17th of July the Second Military Railway Service in France consisted of 30 officers,

2 warrant officers, and 162 enlisted men, with one officer attached. Their headquarters was fully established, and with the arrival of their assigned units, the capture of rail lines, and the arrival of supplies and materials from England, the railroad operations were taking the form of a fully developed project.

The first scheduled train operated over a main line in France ran from Cherbourg to Carentan on the 11th of July. It consisted of a French steam engine, a box car placed immediately behind the engine to receive any blast of a mine exploding on the track — the assumption being that the engine would travel over the mine in the pre-blast period and the box car would take the explosion — and two streamlined passenger coaches. The run was 50 kilometers and was scheduled for one hour and forty-five minutes. On July 13th a work train was run beyond Carentan to haul fifteen cars of captured cement for use at Cherbourg. This was the first actual freight hauled by the Second Military Railway Service in France. On July 17th a new time-table was published establishing first-class passenger train service between Cherbourg, Carentan, and Lison, with two round trips daily. On July 22nd the first troop train was operated, consisting of 11 coaches, and carrying the 720th Railway Operating Battalion from Cherbourg to their new station at Lison. On the 25th of July the railroad made its first general troop movement, carrying 101 personnel of the 290th General Hospital from Cherbourg to Carentan.

While train hauls were short and light during this period, due mainly to the comparatively small area of territory occupied, much needed time for preparation was thus afforded. Additional trackage was being placed in service as rapidly as possible and railway equipment was being received from the United Kingdom, classified, and placed in readiness for the day of the much hoped for "break-through". On the 29th of July the first sea-train was unloaded at Cherbourg, bringing 11 Diesel engines, 37 gondolas, 10 box cars, 3 cabooses (including General Burpee's office on wheels), and 4 equipment cars. From then on equipment continued to pour in, in an ever increasing flood.

By the end of July the Second Military Railway Service could look upon a small but well-ordered rail network, a supply of classified equipment ready for use, and a record of actual accomplishment. Two hundred thirty-one freight trains had been operated, hauling a total of 31,907 net tons over the 52 miles of single and 46.3 miles of double track in use. This was an average of 1519.36 net tons for each day of operation. Freight trains had been run for a total of 5080.3 miles, 2792 cars had been used with an average tonnage of 5.96 each. One hundred and two passenger trains had been operated with a total of 4524 passengers carried. This was a good record at the time, but it was soon to be dwarfed.

The month of August was characterized, for the Second Military Railway Service, by a spectacular expansion of territory, made possible by the rapid development of the offensive launched by the Allied Forces. During the month many new Railway Operating Battalions were received at the beaches and allotted territories behind the advance.

The Port of Cherbourg was getting into full swing, and the railways were being called upon for ever increasing accomplishments. The first ten days of August alone showed an increase in operations over the entire month of July. Two hundred eighty-four freight trains were operated for a total of 6748.1 miles, averaging 214.8 tons per train and 8,322 passengers were carried.

Also during August, the Headquarters, Communications Zone, arrived on the continent, and the Headquarters of the Second Military Railway Service was moved into encampment at Valognes to be near the Office of the Chief of Transportation. This move took place on August 13th, with personnel being billeted in a tented camp and the offices installed in GI prefabricated buildings.

Here again it was necessary to improvise, and the Headquarters installed its own phone system between the various offices and billets, using again captured articles. A central mess was in operation at this camp and, relieved of their responsibility of feeding the hungry mouths of the men, personnel of Company Headquarters busied themselves installing boardwalks around the muddier spots of the area and improving latrine and washing facilities. The Engineering Dept. set up its captured reproducing facilities and again went to work. The Equipment and Stores

Departments were kept busy with men scattered at various unloading points checking and distributing the "thousand-and-one" articles of railway supplies which were now arriving steadily.

From Valognes a detachment was dispatched to Rennes to make reconnaissance of the Brittany Peninsula lines and to look over the lines east toward Le Mans and Paris, which were already being overrun by our advancing armies.

With the ever stretching rail lines real trouble was now developing from a signal and communications standpoint. Bombs dropped along railway lines, allied shelling, and German demolitions had destroyed practically all the railway communication system. As we took each section, practically all the wire was found down; many poles had been felled, and communication installations such as switch boards and station buildings had been destroyed. While the reconstruction of the rail line had progressed most expeditiously, signal repairs had failed to keep pace.

The Signal Corps usually strung one line along the railway line. This wire was hung on trees and bushes along banks and hedgerows. Many times it was merely dropped on the ground along the right-of-way. Due to the single line, many breakdowns occurred. Several times the wire was cut by German sympathizers or by straggling German soldiers caught in the captured territory. When these breakdowns occurred a courier in a jeep was dispatched from the last point of communication to the next dispatch point with orders.

This lack of communications which was slowing the rail operations on down through Battalion to crew levels, was also seriously hampering the Headquarters in its necessary contact with advance reconnaissance parties and with the various subordinate Operating Battalions and Grand Divisions. In order to alleviate this condition arrangements were made to have 500-watt radio transmitting and receiving units, mounted on 6 X 6 army trucks, assigned to the Headquarters. These sets were completely self-sufficient, carrying their own power units on two-wheel trailers. A radio school was established and operated by Headquarters, Second Military Railway Service, and men were drawn from the various Battalions to attend these classes and eventually man the communication trucks.

These preparations consumed the greater part of the month, but by the 31st everything was in readiness and the units were dispatched, one each to Cherbourg, Lison, Folligny, Rennes, Le Mans, Argentan, and Chartres, with two for Paris and one remaining at Valognes as the Headquarters unit. These units materially decreased the time consumed for communications and went a long way toward knitting together the various units under Headquarters into a coordinated body.

During the month of August itself, however, while this communications net was being built and prepared, contact with forward units had to continue. Many demonstrations of "Yank" ingenuity were made. Regular "jeep" courier service between Headquarters and the various battalions was established, with the drivers often having to run through territory just passed — or in some cases merely by-passed — by our advancing armies, and which abounded with snipers. The story of the first large group of trains which ran east from the Cherbourg Peninsula is highlighted by many wild dashes across the country by couriers in jeeps, while loaded trains stood waiting all along the line, tied up because of lack of orders.

The first big test of the Military Railway Service, and a demonstration of the importance of the railway operations on the continent, came when an order for supplies from General George S. Patton, Jr. was filled, beginning August 15th. At that time General Patton, who was fighting in the vicinity of Paris, ordered gasoline, rations, ammunition, and medical supplies moved from dumps near the beaches to a dump at Le Mans, where the Third Army trucks would pick them up and deliver them to the fighting troops. General Patton stated that if the supplies were furnished on time, he would reach Paris in two weeks. This was the challenge to the Military Railway Service.

The advance of Patton's Army during the first two weeks of August had been so rapid that the reconstruction of the railroad had been unable to keep pace with him. On August the 15th

the main rail line from Folligny to Le Mans south through Rennes was useless on account of the great amount of destruction that had occurred during the German retreat. On the north, the line from Folligny through Vire to Surdon was cut because of the fighting in the Argentan (Falaise Gap) area.

The Military Railway Service was faced with the the problem of getting these trains to the Le Mans area before the rail lines were completely operative. It was decided that since the secondary, or branch lines, had suffered less destruction, they would be used until the main lines were ready. Trains were routed from Folligny to the secondary line at Pontaubault. From there they ran to St. Hilaire and Mayenne, back down to the main line at La Chapelle, and thence to Le Mans.

Railway Operating Battallions and Railway Grand Divisions were quickly placed at advantageous points along the line, with personnel not only accomplishing their railway duties, but acting as RTO and way station agents as well. A work train ran ahead to check the line and the first train of supplies reached Le Mans on August 15th. Groups of trains ran into Le Mans thereafter in an ever increasing flow. The Military Railway Service had kept its schedule with General Patton, and he in turn bettered his. Paris was quickly liberated.

During the month of August the Second Military Railway Service operated 760 freight trains handling a total 104,262 net tons, with an average tonnage per train of 137.1. As for the end of this month there were 794.62 miles of single and 211.25 miles of double track in operation, over which freight trains were operated for 20,698.7 miles. Passenger trains operated totalled 149, carrying 24,926 passengers. Twenty-five hospital trains were handled. Railway operations were "looking-up".

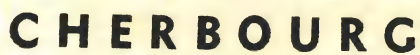
Meanwhile reconnaissance parties of the Military Railway Service pushed ahead to Paris practically side by side with the armies. Trains had already been operated to Chartres. On the 30th of August the first American-operated train arrived at Battignolles Yard, Paris, where it was received by M. Le Nesueray, President General of the French Railways.

It now became apparent that a more centralized location would be necessary for the Headquarters because of the great distances involved to the advancing railheads. Advance parties were dispatched posthaste to Paris, and movement of the entire Headquarters to Paris was completed on September 9th. Offices of the Commanding General, Transportation and Equipment Departments were established in St. Lazare Station, while the offices of the Administration, Engineering, and Stores Departments were set up in the same building with the Office of the Chief of Transportation at 52, Avenue des Champs-Élysées. The Motor Pool settled at 29, rue Colisée. The Hotel Vouillemont, located at 15, rue Boissy d'Anglas, adjoining the American Embassy, was secured as billets for the Officers and enlisted men.

It was a revelation to move into modern offices after the very dark and inconvenient GI buildings occupied at Valognes. The Second Military Railway Service had thus far greatly surpassed the original planning. A new era was now opening.



THIRD EDITION





Unloading 2-8-0 locomotives
at Cherbourg, France
July 1944

Unloading cars from
LST'S.



Cherbourg, France.
July 1944.

Unloading Diesel locomotives.

Cherbourg, France.
July 1944.



Don't look now, but there's
a 2-8-0 locomotive at the
lower end of those cables...



Upper left — Terre Plein Yard.
10 July 1944.

Upper right — Terre Plein Yard.
21 Nov. 1944.



Cherbourg roundhouse.
July 1944.



Gare maritime.
Cherbourg.



July 1944.

Demolished tunnel near
Cherbourg on the Cherbourg-
Carentan line.



July 1944.



Results of bombing on the
Cherbourg peninsula.
July-August 1944.



Bomb damage to track.
Cherbourg peninsula.
July 1944.





The Fermanville Arch on
Cherbourg - Barfleur line.



July 1944.



Bridge destruction near
Coutances.
August 1944.



1124 Terr.
↙
↓



Oise River bridge at
Epluches.

Bridge destruction and repair
near St. Lo, France.



← Before.

After.
↓



Before. ↑

After →



Near Coutances, France.
Before and after repair.



Replaced by
conc slab
in spring 45'
Fr Forces

By Epone Wye 724.
PB1 K 45.9



Emergency type short span
bridge using rail sections for
beams.



British and American rail jeeps
meet near Caen, France.



Wreckage near Valognes.
11 August 1944.





St. Lo railroad station.

Epone station.

724 ROB



Lower right : Motor convoy.

Below : Valognes.



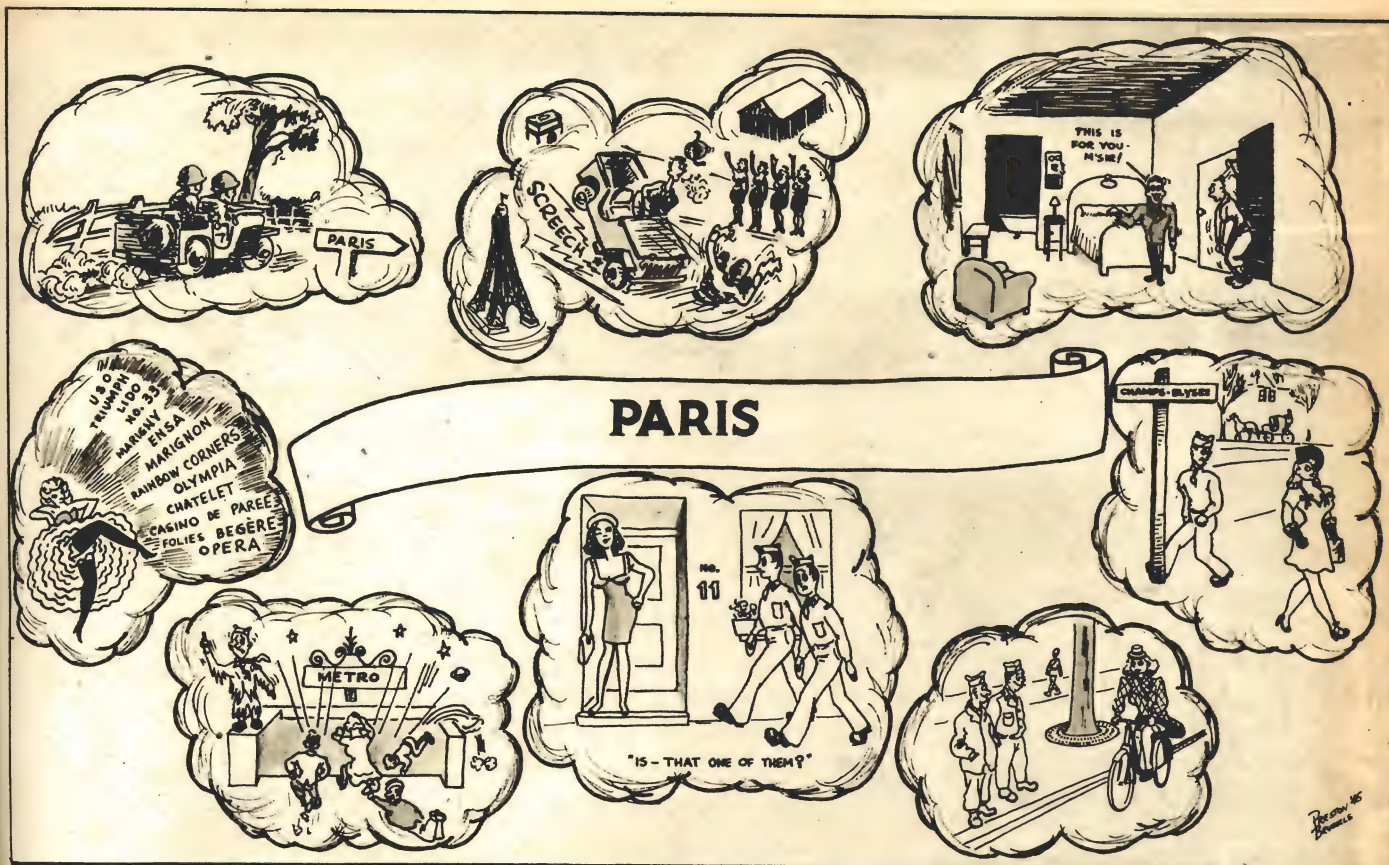


Destruction at St. Lo.
July 1944.









Up through D plus 90 (September 6, 1944), the 2nd MRS had made considerably more progress than had been called for in the original plans for the invasion, it being estimated that by that time the railways would be operating as far east as Le Mans on a very limited network of lines. Actually, on that date railways were in operation to Paris and were on the verge of pushing east to the German border and northeast into Belgium.

By the end of September, three railway lines of communication extended east from Paris. On the north, a line ran from Battignoles Yards, Paris to Compiègne, Valenciennes, and to Liege in Belgium. In the center of the Communications Zone, another line ran from Paris to Soissons and connected to the northern line at Charleroi. The southernmost line of communications from Paris ran east to Sezanne and Nancy. Two lines running roughly north and south connected these three main lines. We had under our jurisdiction in France, Belgium and Luxembourg 2,011.98 miles of single track and 2,776.09 miles of double track as of the end of September.

During the month of September we moved approximately 12,000 tons daily and for the entire month 355,020 tons of supplies were transported by rail to the Armies. Equipment received on the Continent as of the end of September included 702 locomotives and 11,288 cars, of all types. Personnel of the Military Railway Service included four Grand Divisions, twelve Operating Battalions and three Shop Battalions comprising a total of 472 officers and 9993 enlisted men.

The period October, November and December represented for the 2nd MRS in France a period of development in rail areas of operation, which resulted in returning many lines to the French. While very little advance was made in mileage during this period, full advantage of the time was taken to consolidate and develop those lines

under our jurisdiction, to build and repair facilities for train operation, and to improve service to the fullest extent possible.

The problem of maintenance and repair increased during the latter part of 1944. Initially, the lines which were rehabilitated and taken over for military purposes, went through a period of hasty reconstruction and repair. Much of the original reconstruction work was of a temporary and semi permanent nature. Consequently, under heavy traffic, some of the repaired roadbeds and tracks laid over filled shell holes began to sag or go out of line and the problem of continuous and extensive work became necessary. Bridge repairs and reconstruction constituted the major problem of railroad rehabilitation work. As of 15 November approximately 180 damaged railway bridges had been repaired and 125 rebuilt in order to restore railway lines to service.

Communications, which had been so thoroughly destroyed by Allied bombings and by the Germans during their retreat, had been restored and by the end of 1944, we had complete communications coverage throughout the areas occupied in France and Belgium and teleprint service had been established between Cherbourg, Paris and Nancy.

During the months of November and December three major ports were opened; Le Havre, Rouen and Antwerp, which relieved the main line of communication from Cherbourg to the fronts. It was anticipated that the Port of Antwerp would handle most of the tonnage, therefore, we established an Advance Echelon at Antwerp, Belgium; effective 7 November. Personnel consisted of 8 officers and 9 enlisted men and their mission was the supervision, planning and development of the Port of Antwerp for rail operations.

Before the end of December, the Germans had made their mid-December counter-offensive and had driven into Belgium and Luxembourg a distance of approximately 50 miles. However, by the end of December, the Allied Armies had gained the initiative and were forcing back the German salient. Approximately 250 miles of railway track was recaptured by the Germans during the offensive activities of Field Marshal von Rundstedt's troops; primarily these lines were lateral within the area occupied, and none of the major lines of communications were affected. However, enemy air activity was heavy and the 2nd MRS units in the forward areas were strafed and bombed many times. Damage was especially heavy in the Liege and Antwerp areas due to flying bombs. German planes bombed Gare St Lazare, Paris (our Headquarters) during the night of 26 December, causing considerable damage to the station, tracks, equipment and personnel. Several hospital trains were damaged.

The end of 1944 found our lines of communications extending from Normandy through Paris to Aachen, Germany and into Belgium, Luxembourg to the German border. During December we operated 3,136 trains carrying 98,643 loads with a net tonnage of 1,308,937. A peak tonnage was reached on 15 December when 50,784 tons were handled. By 31 December we had received on the Continent 1523 locomotives and 19,383 freight cars of all types. Military Railway Service personnel reached 17,500 made up of some 750 officers and 16,750 enlisted men, engaged in forwarding supplies to the front by rail.

We celebrated our first activation anniversary three days early with a Christmas Party held on Christmas Day. Thirty French orphans were feted to Christmas dinner at the party and they were presented with gifts of toys and candy, the latter being contributed from our rations. The gifts were arrayed on a Christmas tree. Everybody had a swell time and seeing those little orphans happy made us forget the war for a few hours.

We closed a most successful year... knowing that we were performing our mission in an exemplary manner.

We began the new year — 1945 — under conditions of uncertainty due to the German break-through and progress of the drive. While units in the forward areas were alerted for movement should it become necessary, it was possible for all units to remain in the locations previously assigned and to continue to function in their missions of moving supplies to the Armies, and in some instances evacuating supplies and equipment in areas threatened. By the middle of January the drive had been stemmed and operations began to take on an appearance of normalcy with the exception of continued attacks by flying bombs, particularly in the Antwerp and Liege areas, and strafing at other points.

The "Toot Sweet Express" consisting of high priority items for the Armies, made its initial run on 22 January from Cherbourg to the forward areas in 36 hours. Passenger service was established during January between Paris and Brussels, Southern Line of Communication, Rennes, Le Havre,, Nancy and Cherbourg.

New highs were reached during January. We operated 3,440 trains carrying 106,148 loads for a net tonnage of 1,418,576. During the month 1,190 locomotives were given heavy and light repairs and returned to service while 6,128 freight cars of all types were repaired and placed in service.

As of the end of January the 2nd Military Railway Service consisted of approximately 19,000 men and included five Grand Divisions, eighteen Operating Battalions, four Shop Battalions, five Railway Workshops (Mobile) and ten Hospital Train Maintenance Units.

It became apparent during the first part of February that the proper place for our Headquarters was nearer to the front in order that closer supervision might be exercised over operations in the immediate Army Areas. The development of the Port of Antwerp had reduced the value of the previously vital supply lines from Normandy. It was anticipated that the lines west of Paris would be returned to the French during March in order to make more personnel available for operations behind the Armies as rapidly as advances were made. Therefore, arrangements were made to close our Paris Headquarters on 25 February. Headquarters were reopened on 26 February, in the SNCB building, adjoining Gare du Midi, Brussels, Belgium. The Advance Echelon, sent to Belgium in November was absorbed.

February was the peak month to date in amount of tonnage handled. The number of trains handled rose to 6,243 as compared with 3,440 in January. In the 28 days of operation this month, 181,677 loads making 2,632,999 tons were carried a total of 326,616,314 net ton miles. The peak day for tonnage was on 25 February when 127,703 tons were hauled a total of 14,925,427 net ton miles. During the month we operated 179 Hospital and 175 Troop trains. At the end of February we had under our jurisdiction 4,451.56 miles of track.

Practically all of our equipment had been ferried over from England and as of the end of February consisted of 1,190 steam, 117 Diesel locomotives and 19,989 "GI" freight cars.

During February 1,274 locomotives were given heavy and light repairs and returned to service, and 9,120 freight cars of all types were repaired and placed in service.

Up to the end of February, the 2nd MRS had furnished a total of 356 enlisted men to the Ground Forces for infantry training, including 8 from our own Headquarters. The total strength of the 2nd MRS was now 801 officers, 28 warrant officers and 18,178 enlisted men.



PARIS

Scale 1:31,500

English Mile
0 1/2 1 1 1/2 2

Meters
0 500 1000 1500

Metro Lines (indicated by 'M') - Other Railways (indicated by 'R')
English and American Durities &
Routes National N/89
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John Bartholomew & Son Ltd., Edinburgh.



Bridge Destruction
West of Paris.

*St. George
on grande
ceinture line*



Seine R.

724 ML



*Remove
Dead
Bombs
fr 3
Abut*



*Seine
(Canal)*



The Dreux bridge.
February 1945.



Neuilly-sur-Marne bridge.
February 1945.

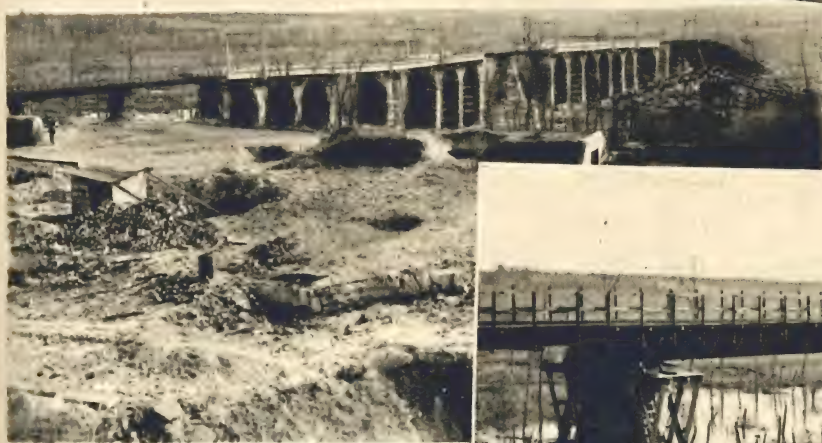




West of Paris and
the Seine River.
Sept. 1944

Houilles

*Sub. Trains fr ML to St Lazare
Rotted over it*



Maintenon Viaduct.
October 1944.



The Paris area.
Sept. - Oct. 1944.





Bridge destruction in
Paris area.

The Seine River.
Sept. - Oct. 1944.

Argenteuil
724 ROB

Replaced with
metre beams,
BUC piers on
conc slab on
timber piles, 60/100
French forces
USA Equipment
& Coordination
supervision.





The Paris area.
Sept. — Oct. 1944.





Soissons station.
29 December 1944.

724
(After Ammo Explosion)

440 cars, 3 days to go up

Rouen yard.
20 November 1944.



To Paris.

Caen yard.
21 November 1944.





The Marne River.

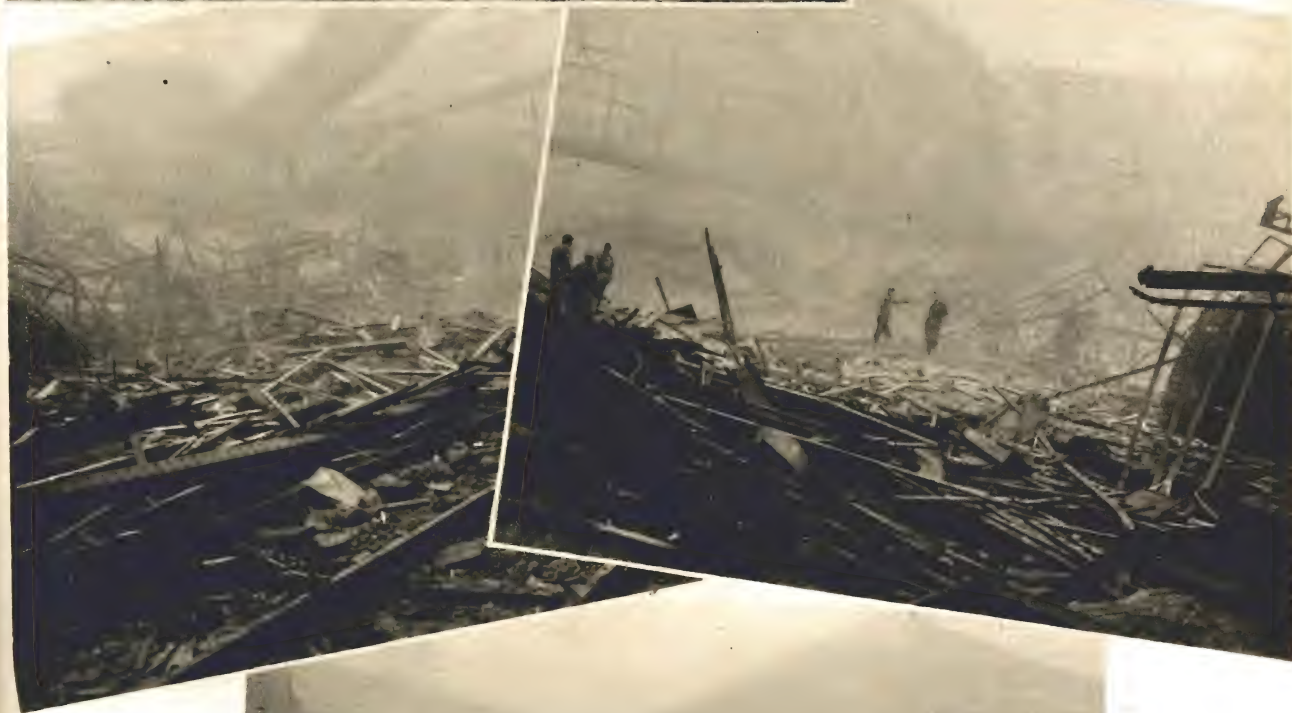
East of Paris.
October 1944





When the St. Lazare station
was bombed.
26 December 1944.
Paris.

724



*Gen Eisenhower's
Train was
there at time.*



Explosion of
in Soisson
29 Dec

724



dropped by plane
724

What a well
placed incendiary charge
can do!



Live ammo salvage 7



M. P. Battalion
Train Guards



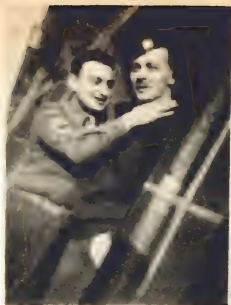








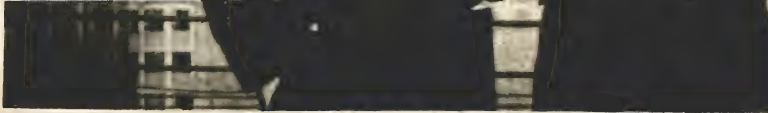




















1^{re} RUE DE TRIUMPH



By St. LAZARE



St. LAZARE





JOYEUX NOËL
ET LES M-E-I-L-L-E-U-R-S
V-O-E-U-X DE TOUS
LES "YANKS"



2 ND

MILITARY RAILWAY SERVICE

25 DECEMBER 1944



Brussels, Belgium in February 1945 was a capitol city of a nation just emerging from the imprisonment of four years of German occupation. It was a city of total darkness by night slumbering fitfully under the threat of possible enemy air attack. It lay beneath a European sky that reverberated with the drone of engines driving planes to targets of war and at times this same sky was crisscrossed and laced into fantastic patterns of light and shadow by searchlights that fingered and probed across the heavens. Brussels was a city lying beneath the aerial highway traversed by robot instruments and it was a city that pulsed with the movement of men and materiel destined for the fighting fronts. It was a nerve center in the Allied transportation and communications system.

When the Allied armies smashed north and east out of France reaching the German border at some points and rolling the German armies back against the last stand defenses of the Third Reich at others, Brussels became more important than Paris as a site of operations for the Second MRS. As a principal rail hub in the northern zone of operations as well as the most centrally located city of consequence in the territory supervised by the Second MRS, it was inevitable that Headquarters be established in Brussels. Thus it was that on 26 February 1945 the Second Military Railway Service moved to Belgium in order to facilitate the supervision of its assigned railway operations.

On the Avenue Fonsny just a short distance from the Gare du Midi, in a building belonging to the SNCB, the new Headquarters were set up. A motor pool was established in a garage located at 51, Vieux Marché aux Grains in the heart of downtown Brussels and the restaurant "Automatique Midi" became the organization's mess hall. Billets for enlisted personnel were located in the Ecole Communale which stood on the Boulevard du Midi almost directly across from the Midi Station.

The beginning of operations from Belgium involved more than a simple change in the location of Headquarters, however. Just as time and tide wait for no man, the progress of a war does not relax its tempo and wait upon those who are engaged in its prosecution. And so it was that the process of settling down in new surroundings was a small part in the task that faced the Second MRS when it picked up the threads of operation in Belgium.

Day by day after the move from Paris had been completed, new territories wrested from the Germans had to be surveyed; captured equipment inventoried; and operating and shop units shifted into a new strategic operating pattern coinciding with military requirements that arose as the drive into Germany gained momentum. Territories had to be mapped and re-mapped as the fortunes of military success increased in favor of Allied arms. Communications as well as courier contact had to be instituted and constantly changed to facilitate and integrate the final and decisive supply operations that lay ahead in Germany. Greater speed and efficiency than ever before required was necessary in every phase of planning and operations in order to maintain rail movements to forward railheads that leap-frogged ahead on the heels of the smashing drive aimed at the heart of Germany.

The magnitude of railway activities in the final phase of military operations prior to V-E Day is revealed partially in the following statistical resume. From the time the Second Military Railway Service undertook control of operations in its Brussels Headquarters up to V-E Day, a total of twenty thousand trains were moved from coastal ports to supply railheads. The movement of this traffic involved the transportation of 642,684 loads totaling 9,041,466 tons of supplies and equipment for a distance of 1,259,129,957 ton miles. During this period, moreover, 1,240 trains including hospital, prisoner, displaced persons and troop trains were handled. And in one month alone, 6 Toot Sweet Express trains carrying top priority freight and supplies were rushed to forward areas to meet emergency needs for special supplies.

Impressive as these figures are, they tell nothing of the individual efforts and human toil that was expended in planning and directing the operations that accounted for this immense activity record. For every train moved, for every ton mile traversed by Second MRS trains there was always the labor and sacrifice of military railroaders — often unsung but nonetheless the sole and indispensable force behind the attainments of the military railway service. From the overall planning born of the conferences between General Burpee and his staff of railroad specialists, to the tangible expression of these plans in departmental activities and finally in the execution of these plans in the field came the driving force that moved trains on time carrying sufficient quantities of materiel to the armies to sustain their successes in eliminating the power of German military might.

Thus, who can say that the draftsman's profile of grade representing a section of main line in Germany was not a part in the magnificent record of operations of the Second Military Railway Service. Who can say that the security of supplies was not essential or that the vigilance over power and rolling stock by the officers and men of the Equipment Department was not important. From Transportation, Engineering, Stores and Administration came individual and collective contributions from which the final results were forged and every man in these departments irrespective of rating or job contributed to the final result. This perhaps is one of the things that sets the Military Railway Service apart from other branches of the army — the whole process of movement and supply by rail transportation is one in which teamwork and coordinated effort is fundamental to success. No one man strikes forth alone gathering unto himself fetes of individual heroics. Rather, all men work together toward a single purpose and when the job is done all share alike in the credit and satisfaction that comes from having done a thing well.

In May, the sands of time had run their course against the German army. Swept first from their Siegfried defenses and thence across the Rhine, the military strength and organization of Germany began to disintegrate. Then the Rhine itself was breached and the German legions went reeling back toward the heart of Germany. Knifed from the east by the irresistible Russian advances and rocked from the west by Allied pressure, Germany was cut into a patchwork of pockets that became the last cells of German resistance. Then, almost as suddenly as it had begun, the war in Europe was over.

News of V-E Day swept through Brussels like an epidemic. It roused the population to exuberant gait. Four years of German subjugation fell away and Brussels, like the rest of Europe, doffed its shrouds. Up and down the streets there ran an unmistakable undercurrent of gratitude that skipped from one person to another leaving unrestrained hilarity in its wake. The day that all Europe had waited and longed for had come.

Meanwhile, in spite of the inevitable sense of satisfaction over the news of victory military establishments took the V-E Day celebration in stride for there was yet another war to be won. In this, the Second Military Railway Service was no exception. There could be no resting upon the laurels of European achievements on V-E Day. The necessity for rail transportation in the redeployment of troops and the transfer of supplies to ports for shipment to the Pacific had to be served and until the transfer of men and supplies could be completed and all rail line turned back to civil control the mission of military railroaders could not be considered fulfilled. Thus, military railway operations after V-E Day continued and the Second Military Railway Service remained on the job.

Nevertheless, on V-E Day the Second Military Railway Service, despite its youth as a military establishment in the European Theater, could claim a worthy record as its tradition. The organization had come to the continent to railroad and move supplies. It had done this and in the doing of it had compiled a record for efficiency and dependability. Those who participated and served so faithfully in the months that stretched from Cherbourg and Valognes to Brussels can take pride in their achievements. The Second Military Railway Service served, and served well.



BRUSSELS



The Montsen viaduct near
Aachen, Germany.



Meuse River bridges
in Liege, Belgium.



2nd MRS reconnaissance
'plane.



Triangular truss RR bridge
near Duren, Germany.

2-8-0 Locomotive.



350 Hp Diesel.



Left center :
1,000 Hp Diesel.
Above :
500 Hp Diesel.
Left :
650 Hp Diesel.



Duren, Germany.



Liege, Belgium.



Kassel, Germany.



Antwerp, Belgium.



Munchen-Gladbach,
Germany.



Aachen, Germany.



Munster, Germany.



Brussels (Midi), Belgium.
(2nd MRS Hq. building-
center).



Reconstruction in
the Aachen tunnel.
19 March 1945.



18 April 1945.



The Auto-railer.



Double turntable at
Cologne.



Railhead at Brohl, Germany.
Transferring POL to trucks.



Electric switch control
mechanism, Germany.



Where a German locomotive fell through a weakened bridge near Kassel, Germany.

Autobahn bridge dropped on RR near Montabaur, Germany.



Mobile water pump at the Roer River bridge near Baal, Germany.

Rhine River bridge near Wesel.
(note the cars still on the deck).



Gliders that carried the
Airborne troops across
the Rhine River.
3 April 1945.



Belgian Clearance car.



Marburg, Germany.
April 1945



MRS on the air-Station
JEIU - Brussels mobile
radio unit.



German track construction.





Moselle River bridge
near Coblenz.



Pont bridges on the Rhine
near Remagen.

Near Bonn.





The famous Remagen bridge

Railroad bridge over the Rhine River at Urmitz.



Near Colbe, Germany.

Long span highway
Bailey bridge
at Maastricht, Holland.



*Crossed on trip
with Jimmy
Ballach*

The Wesel Railroad bridge
over the Rhine.
started 29 March 1945.
completed 8 April 1945.
10 DAYS TO BUILD.



The bridge that was
at Wesel.





Rhine River bridge destruction
near Wesel, Germany.





Victory bridge over the
 Rhine River at Duisburg,
 Germany.
 started 2 May 1945
 completed 8 May 1945
 6 DAYS TO BUILD



Dedication ceremonies.

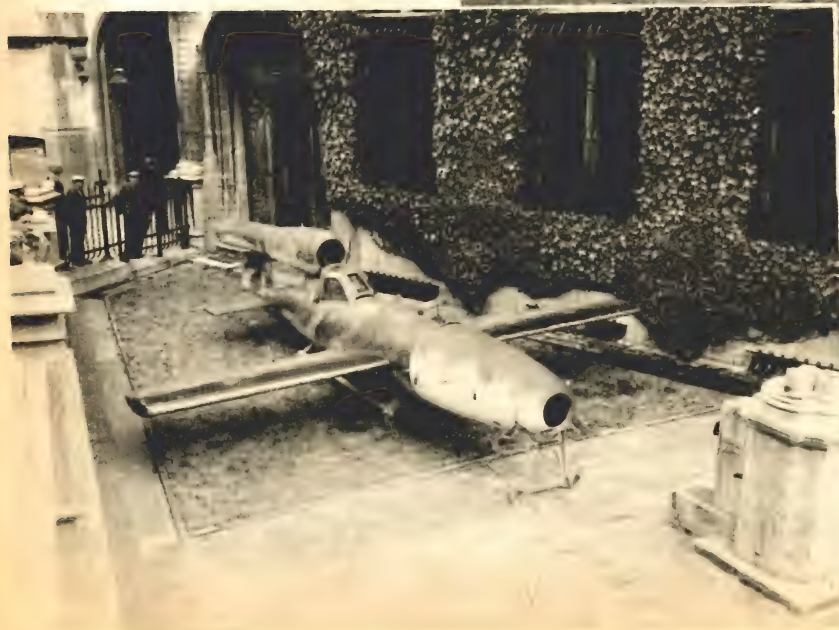
Bombed locomotives
at Munster.
April 1945.



Wesel, Germany.
April 1945.

Munster yard.
April 1945.

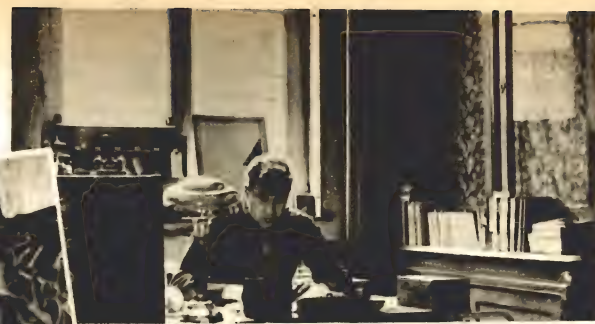
Antwerp, Belgium.
V-2 Rockets crated for
shipment to the U.S.



Upper left :
Tail fins and noses.
Upper right :
Fuel tanks (2 to a rocket).
Left :
Shipping and launching
cradles.
Lower :
Pilot-controlled rocket.



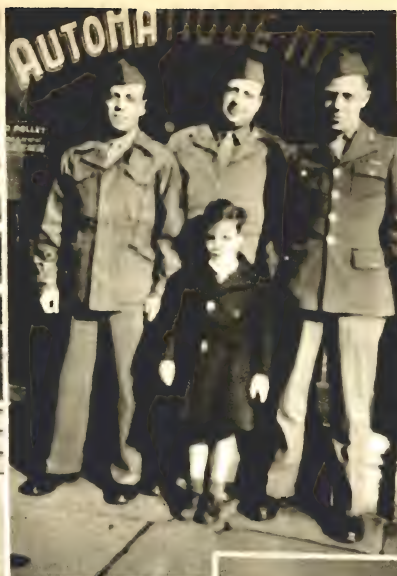
DESTINATION TOKYO
Loading ships at Antwerp













*Limey Trucks
Limey town,
Bruxelles*



*36 chev
most of the
civilian cars
in Bruxelles
were US,
latest model
1941*



Mercedes Benz



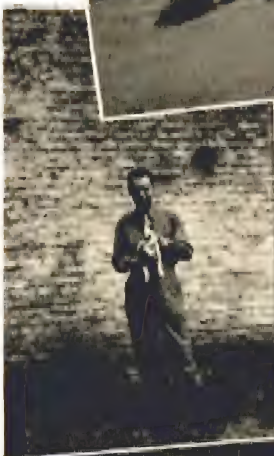
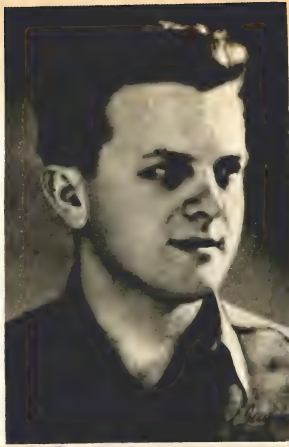














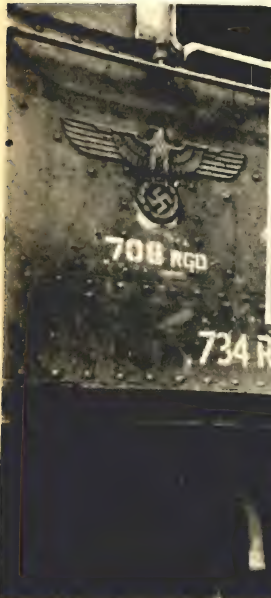






Used this train to go from Dressel to Marseille





Tunnel
e Rachen



Our Chapel. — Dedicated on July the 8th 1945.
Headquarters Building, Brussels.



Chaplain James D. G. Collins.

General Gray and General Burpee.





AWARDS AND DECORATIONS

NATURALIZATION

ARCHIBALD BLACK

GEORGE FALSON

In the American Embassy Library, on 5 January 1945, the oath of naturalization was administered to Archibald Black by Cyrus B. Follmer, American Vice Consul, in the presence of Curtis D. Buford, Charles L. Hand, Chester L. Minter and Charles H. Smiley. Black thereby became the third man to be naturalized in Europe after American Forces landed on the continent in World War II. Four days later, on 9 January, in the 48th U.S. General Hospital in Paris, George Falson was naturalized. Witnesses at the second ceremony included those already mentioned as well as E.H. Qualls and William R. Simone.

LEGION OF MERIT

GENERAL C.-L. BURPEE

Awarded 31 July 1943 for exceptionally meritorious service in the performance of outstanding service in North Africa from November 1942 to March 1943.

OAK LEAF CLUSTER TO LEGION OF MERIT

GENERAL C.-L. BURPEE

Awarded 12 March 1944 for exceptionally meritorious service to the Government in a duty of great responsibility in Italy from 9 September 1943 to 2 October 1943.

BRONZE STAR

GENERAL C.-L. BURPEE

Awarded 20 February 1945, by Major General FRANK S. ROSS, in the Paris Area for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations during the period August 1944 to November 1944 in France.

PETER V. DECKER

Awarded 4 March 1945, by GO 26, Hq, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations during the period 14 July 1944 to 15 September 1944 in France.

GEORGE N. SLADE

Awarded 16 May 1945 by GO 79, Hq, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations as Gen. Supt., Trans. Dept., Second Mil Ry Sv, during the period 13 July 1944 to 1 January 1945.

EVERETT W. HARGRAVE

Awarded 17 May 1945, by GO 81, Hq, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations as Superintendent of Car Service, Hqs 2nd MRS, during the period 20 March 1944 to 1 January 1945.

GEORGE J. MULICK

Awarded 17 May 1945, by GO 81, Hq, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations, as Asst. Gen. Mgr., 2nd MRS, and Member of Advisory Board and later Advance Party, 2nd MRS, during the period 20 March 1944 to 1 November 1944.

WILLIAM T. ELMES

Awarded 19 May 1945, by GO 83, HQ, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations, as Asst. Gen., Mgr., Engr. Dept., 2nd MRS, and Member of Advisory Board, Office of Chief of Transportation, ETOUSA, and Advance Party 2nd MRS during the period 20 March 1944 to 16 November 1944.

EVERETTE H. QUALLS

Awarded 19 May 1945, by GO 83, Hq, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations, as Executive Officer, Ry Hq, 2nd MRS, ETO, during the period 20 March 1944 to 1 March 1945.

GERALD E. GRAVES

Awarded 21 April 1945, by GO 61, HQ, Com, Z, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations, as Night Chief Report Clerk during the period 5 Oct. 1944 to 1 Dec. 1944.

McELREE B. HILLIARD

Awarded 21 April 1945, by GO 61, Hq, Com Z, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations, as a driver for Advance Party, 2nd MRS, during the period 16 June 1944 to 15 July 1944.

GEORGE R. MORGANFELD

Awarded 21 April 1945, by GO 61, Hq, Com Z, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations as Clerk-general during period 28 August 1944 to 15 October 1944.

EARL K. STICE

Awarded 21 April 1945, by GO 61, Hq, Comzone, ETOUSA, for meritorious service in connection with Military Operations as a telegrapher during the period 11 July 1944 to 4 September 1944.

PURPLE HEART

JAMES A. FISHER

Awarded 29 September 1944, by GO 3, 2nd Mil. Ry Sv, for wounds received as a result of enemy action in the Antwerp, Belgium area.

CHARLES E. PHILLIPS

Awarded 1 January 1945, by GO 1, 2nd Mil. Ry Sv, for wounds received as a result of enemy action in the Paris, France area.

WILLIAM H. DERR
(deceased)

Awarded 25 January 1945, by GO 2, 2nd Mil. Ry Sv, for wounds received as a result of enemy action in the Soissons, France area.

GEORGE FALSON

Awarded 25 January 1945, by GO 2, 2nd Mil. Ry Sv, for wounds received as a result of enemy action in the Paris, France area.

MERITORIOUS SERVICE UNIT PLAQUE AWARD

2nd M. R. S.

Awarded under provisions of Section 1, Circular 345, War Department, 23 August 1944, as amended. Auth.: Section 1, GO 1, Hqs Comzone ETOUSA, 3 January 1945. This award was made for superior performance of duty and achievement and maintenance of a high standard of discipline.

IMPORTANT DATES

(other than avec mademoiselle)

- 28 December 1943 Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Military Railway Service, activated at 0001 CWT, Camp Plauche, Louisiana, per paragraph 3, General Orders No 102, Headquarters, ASF, New Orleans Port of Embarkation, dated 20 December 1943, under the command of BRIGADIER GENERAL (then Colonel) CLARENCE L. BURPEE.
- 5 February 1944 Unit was alerted for movement.
- 12 February 1944 Colonel Burpee departed for Washington.
- 14 February 1944 2nd M.R.S., consisting of 31 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 164 enlisted men, departed from Camp Plauche, New Orleans, Louisiana, at 1000 hours for new station.
- 16 February 1944 Arrived Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, 1030 hours.
- 18 February 1944 Colonel Burpee rejoined the headquarters.
- 24 February 1944 Alerted for overseas movement.
- 25 February 1944 Advance party, consisting of 16 officers and 4 enlisted men, departed Camp Kilmer, New Jersey, at 0915, arrived NYPE 1130, and boarded USAT General George S. Simonds at 1230.
- 26 February 1944 Main body — 16 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 163 enlisted men, departed Camp Kilmer, 1915, arrived NYPE 2200, boarded ship 2330.
- 27 February 1944 At 0835 hours the USAT General George S. Simonds lifted anchor and departed New York.
- 3 March 1944 At 1700 the USAT General George S. Simonds dropped out of convoy account mechanical trouble, escorted by Navy DE.
- 4 March 1944 At 0400 hours convoy was rejoined after temporary repairs. At 1200 hours USAT General George S. Simonds forced out of convoy second time and made for port to effect repairs, under escort of a Navy DE.
- 6 March 1944 USAT General George S. Simonds dropped anchor 1225 hours at Argentia, Newfoundland (US Army Post Fort McAndrew).
- 13 March 1944 USAT General George S. Simonds lifted anchor and departed Argentia, 1025 hours, with DE escort.
- 14 March 1944 Joined second convoy at 0915.
- 18 March 1944 Submarines attacked convoy — a tanker was torpedoed and sunk. All personnel at boat stations for five hours. Reports indicated Navy escorts rescued crew of tanker and also disposed of submarine.
- 20 March 1944 USAT General George S. Simonds dropped anchor in the Firth of Clyde at 1026. Unit debarked at 1700 hours at Greenock, Scotland, entrained at 1815 — 31 officers, 2 warrant officers, and 157 enlisted men. One officer and ten enlisted men remained on board as baggage and organizational equipment detail.
- 21 March 1944 Arrived Little Heath, Essex, England, at 1400. Announcement was made at meeting of unit at 1900 that Colonel Burpee had been promoted to Brigadier General, effective 24 February 1944.
- 22 March 1944 Experienced first air raid. Personnel of the command authorized to wear the EAME Theater Ribbon.
- 24 March 1944 Headquarters established in London, England, with Office of the Chief of Transportation.
- 25 March 1944 First mail from home received.
- 23 April 1945 2nd Military Railway Service assigned to Forward Echelon, Communications Zone, for the Invasion.
- 8 May 1944 Alerted for movement to the Continent.
- 4 June 1944 Warning order received for unit to be prepared for movement to Continent anytime after 10 June 1944.
- 6 June 1944 D-DAY.
- 14 June 1944 Advance Detachment, including 6 officers and 4 enlisted men, departed at 0830 by truck for Winchester, England. Detachment "A", consisting of 11 officers, 1 warrant officer, and 52 enlisted men, departed by truck for Chadwell Heath, there entraining for Tidworth, England.
- 15 June 1944 Advance Detachment arrived Southampton, England. First German robot planes landed in vicinity of Little Heath Camp.
- 16 June 1944 One party of Advance Detachment departed from Southampton, enroute France.
- 17 June 1944 First group of men from Military Railway Service, two officers and three enlisted men, landed in France at Utah Beach.
- 20 June 1944 Detachment "B", including 5 officers and 61 enlisted men, departed Little Heath Camp at 0730, entraining at Chadwell Heath for Bristol, England, arriving at 1345.
- 22 June 1944 Detachment "B" departed Bristol 0825, arrived Reading 1345.

24 June 1944 Detachment "C" departed Little Heath Camp by truck convoy at 1245, entrained Waterloo Station, London, 1533, arrived Stockbridge 1915, proceeded by truck convoy to Northwood Park, Hampshire, England, 3 miles west of Winchester, arriving 2005 hours.

27 June 1944 Remainder of Advance Detachment arrived in France by plane, joining first group at St Catz.

28 June 1944 First 2nd MRS casualty when Major Boyd W. Stone was wounded when crossing the Vire River Bridge near Carentan under fire. Detachment "A" departed Tidworth at 1350, arrived Southampton at 1830.

29 June 1944 General Burpee departed London by plane and joined Advance Detachment in France.

1 July 1944 Detachment "A" boarded EMP Broadsword at 1530.

2 July 1944 Detachment "A" departed England on EMP Broadsword at 0500 hours, arrived Omaha Beach, France, 1530 hours.
Detachment "B" departed Reading 0910, arrived Southampton 1145.

3 July 1944 Detachment "A" joined Advance Detachment in Cherbourg.

4 July 1944 Detachment "B" boarded Canadian Ship, LCA type, HMCS Prince David at 1130 hours.

5 July 1944 Detachment "B" arrived Omaha Beach, France, 1515, after being delayed on a landing craft which went aground on a sunken wreck. Departed by truck convoy, joined Advance and "A" Detachments at Cherbourg at 2350. Detachment "C" departed Northwood Park, Hampshire, 1000 hours, arrived Southampton 1120.

7 July 1944 Detachment "C" boarded SS Empire Rapier at 1725, embarked 1933 and anchored in the Solent between the Isle of Wight and Southampton at 2150.

8 July 1944 SS Empire Rapier embarked at 0445, anchored off the coast of France at 1445. Personnel of Detachment "C" disembarked Omaha Beach at 1635.

9 July 1944 Detachment "C" joined other detachments in Cherbourg. Headquarters established at Cherbourg, France.

11 July 1944 First military train operated over main line from Cherbourg to Carentan.

25 July 1944 St Lo break-through.

29 July 1944 First sea-train unloaded at Cherbourg.

13 August 1944 Headquarters at Cherbourg, France, closed reopened at Valognes, France. Detachment established at Rennes, France.

25 August 1944 2nd MRS called upon to do first big job for the Armies — deliver 30 trains to Le Mans — 31 were delivered and on time.

27 August 1944 Fall of Paris.

29 August 1944 Général Burpee departed Valognes with Advance Party of the Headquarters for Paris.

9 September 1944 Headquarters established at Paris, France.

7 November 1944 Advance Echelon established at Antwerp, Belgium.

4 December 1944 Advance Echelon, Antwerp, closed, reopened at Brussels, Belgium.

8 December 1944 2nd MRS authorized bronze service star for participation in Normandy Campaign.

26 December 1944 Gare St Lazare, Paris in which Headquarters, 2nd MRS was located, was bombed by German planes at 2245. Two enlisted men assigned to 2nd MRS were injured.

28 December 1944 First anniversary of 2nd MRS marks a period of accomplishment.

3 January 1945 General Orders 1, Communications Zone, European Theater of Operations, awarded the Meritorious Service Unit Plaque to 2nd MRS, the first such award in the theater.

22 January 1945 First "Toot Sweet" Express, carrying high priority freight, completed run from Cherbourg to forward railheads.

31 January 1945 2nd MRS authorized bronze service star for participation in Northern France Campaign.

9 February 1945 Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2nd Military Railway Service, organized under T/O and E 55-302, 10 April 1943, reorganized under T/O and E 55-302, 4 May 1944.

16 February 1945 Brigadier General Carl R. Gray, Jr., assumed command as Director General, Military Railway Service Communications Zone, ETOUSA, which included the commands of the 1st MRS in the South and 2nd MRS in the North.

25 February 1945 Headquarters, Paris, closed as of 2400 hours.

26 February 1945 Headquarters established at Brussels, Belgium at 0001 hours, in building located at 48 Avenue Fonsny. Rear Echelon established at Paris, France.

24 March 1945 Advance Echelon established at Munchen-Gladbach.

3 April 1945 2nd MRS assumed administrative control of units of the command, in addition to technical control exercised since arrival on the Continent.

8 April 1945 First bridge opened across the Rhine at Wesel, Germany, and 2nd MRS operated first train into Germany, east of the Rhine.

1 May 1945 Advance Echelon established at Brunswick, Germany.

8 May 1945 V-E DAY.

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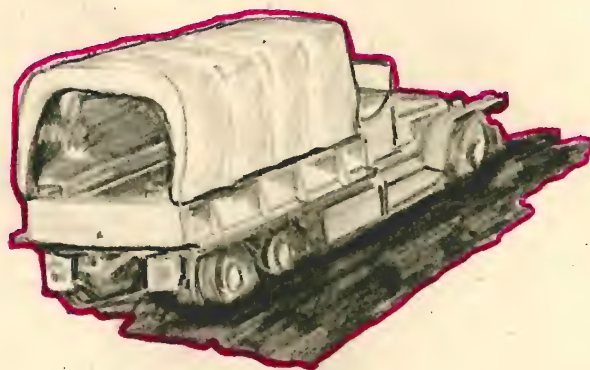
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